

Susanna Breido With Her Mother, Dina Breido And Sisters Rakhil And Ada



This picture was sent to my father who was in exile in Siberia.

From left to right: Rakhil (Rosa), my elder sister; Ada, younger sister; my mom Dina Breido and me. Rosa is 12 years old here, Ada is 3 and I am 8 years old.

I finished 9 grades of secondary school before the war and on June 26th 1941 I entered a 6-month nurses' courses. My sister Ada had a tragic fate.

At first everything went for her rather well. She had a real gift for languages, mathematics, biology and other sciences. She finished school with a golden medal and entered the faculty of biology of the Leningrad State University in 1948.

After defending her Ph.D. thesis in 1957 Ada began to work as biochemist at the Institute of Cytology. In 1975, a day before defending her thesis for a Doctor's degree she committed suicide. There was preliminary defense, academicians and friends arrived. No one expected it.

Of course she was very excited and smoked in chain, which did not happen before, but there were a lot of reasons for that: a hopelessly handicapped child; a mentally diseased sister; an unlucky private life; worries connected with the trial over a good friend of hers, a famous Soviet rights-defender, Sergey Adamovich Kovalyov; natural agitation before the defense of the thesis. And she did not stand all this strain.

They had 6 people in their department with medical education, who had a very good attitude to her, but no one noticed that she was in an absolutely abnormal, psyched-out state.

They apologized later to me and mother. After Ada's death mother fell seriously ill. She died of cancer in 1983. I was not married, but it was not a sacrifice to my sick relatives.

A close friend of mine was murdered on May 5th, 1945 in Berlin. We agreed to meet on the first Saturday after the war in Leningrad at the corner of 5th Sovetskaya street and Grechesky, but the encounter did not happen... many girls of my generation did not get married as their real and potential fiances perished in the war.

Besides, I had a personal reason. I had bad heredity. The type of tuberculosis that I inherited from my father [which he inherited from his mother] was not hazardous and contagious for people around, but my children would have most probably inherited it.

My friend Yakov knew it and he was not afraid of it, but I could not take risk with anyone else.